

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00355 211154Z

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7626

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0355

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EE. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, CZ

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS-TO-CUSTOMS RELATIONS ON NARCOTICS MAATTERS

REF: STATE 035502

1. FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE WORKING-
LEVEL LIAISON ON NARCOTICS CONTROL MATTERS CENTRALIZED
THROUGH DEA, WHOSE REPRESENTATIVE IN VIENNA HAS RESPONSIBILITY
FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

2. IN THE FIRST PLACE, INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES BY DEA AND
THE U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO CONFUSION
ON THE CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE AS TO WHO WAS DOING WHAT, AND WITH
WHICH, AND TO WHOM. JUST SUCH AN INCIDENT OCCURRED LAST YEAR,
WHEN WE RECEIVED VISITS BY U.S. CUSTOMS AND DEA
REPRESENTATIVES IN RAPID SUCCESSION; OUR CZECHOSLOVAK
INTERLOCUTORS WERE UNDERSTANDABLY PUZZLED BY THE APPARENT
INDEPENDENCE OF THESE VISITORS, WHOSE INTERESTS APPEARED
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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 00355 211154Z

VERY SIMILAR, IF NOT IDENTICAL.

3. A SECOND FACTOR, WHICH WE HAVE POINTED OUT IN THE PAST, INVOLVES THE FACT THAT THE CZECHOSLOVAK CUSTOMS SERVICE IS A PART OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE. THE DIRECTOR OF THIS SERVICE HAS BEEN VERY EXPLICIT IN TELLING US THAT PROSPECTS FOR MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION BETWEEN OUR TWO CUSTOMS SERVICES ARE AND WILL REMAIN DIM SO LONG AS "THE UNITED STATES MAINTAINS THE ARTIFICIAL BARRIERS TO TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES". EXCLUSION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM THE BENEFITS OF THE TRADE ACT OF 1974 BY INCLUSION OF THE LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT IN THIS ACT (SEC. 408) CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO SOFTEN THIS POSITION.

4. AT THE PRESENT TIME, WE ARE - THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS- WORKING TO OPEN CONTACTS BETWEEN THE VIENNA-BASED DEA REPRESENTATIVE AND CZECHOSLOVAK OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN ALL ASPECTS OF NARCOTICS CONTROL. WE ARE OPTIMISTIC AS TO THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF THESE EFFORTS, BUT FEAR THEY COULD BE DILUTED WERE THERE TO BE A PARALLEL ATTEMPT TO SET UP AN INDEPENDENT CUSTOMS-TO-CUSTOMS RELATIONSHIP.
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